

## **THE PARIS MOUNTAIN, SC, WATERSHED RESEARCH PROJECT: A PUBLIC EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY**

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**ABSTRACT:** The upstate region of South Carolina is experiencing a rapid growth in population that is leading to development pressure on pristine and underdeveloped watersheds. One area now undergoing extensive new development is Paris Mountain. Proposed development of watersheds on the north side of Paris Mountain has led to major concerns over the effect of development on undisturbed watersheds that drain into Paris Mountain State Park. With funding from the Environmental Protection Agency, we are initiating a long-term study of the water, sediment and chemical fluxes, and biological changes in order to document the effect of an “environmentally-friendly” development on the watershed. This study represents a unique partnership between Furman University, the South Carolina Department of Parks and Recreation, the Roper Mountain Science Center of the Greenville County School System, the Paris Mountain Watershed Association, and the Chestnut Oaks subdivision developer. Once established, the watershed study will be used by Furman University to teach watershed dynamics to undergraduates, by the Roper Mountain Science Center for K-12 student field trips and teacher development workshops, and by the Paris Mountain State Park as a part of their environmental center in the park, which attracts some 300,000 visitors per year.

**KEY TERMS:** Watershed research, public education.

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